

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

obtaining information related to a mapping between first and second addresses associated with a network-resource, wherein the first address is a private virtual internet protocol (VIP) address and the second address is a public VIP address; and

sending the mapping information to a load balancing device to allow the load balancing device to load balance traffic to the network-resource using at least one metric associated with the second address and the mapping information, said at least one metric being usable with VIP addresses rather than with real addresses.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein sending the mapping information to the load balancing device includes sending the second address instead of the first address to the load balancing device to allow the load balancing device to identify the second address as a virtual private/public VIP address on a network device through which is usable to access the network-resource can be accessed.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein determining the mapping information between the first and second addresses comprises determining the mapping from user configuration input.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein determining the mapping information between the first and second addresses comprises:

establishing a message communication between a network device ~~through which~~ usable to access the network-resource can be accessed and a mapping device that maps the first address to the second address; and

receiving the mapping information from the mapping device via the message communication.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving the mapping information by a first component of a network device ~~through which~~usable to access the network-resource is accessed; and

load balancing traffic to the network-resource by a second component of the network device based on the received mapping information.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a first mapping information for a first network-resource associated with a network device ~~through which~~usable to access the first network-resource can be accessed;

receiving a second mapping information for a second network-resource associated with the network device at a remote load balancing device;

load balancing traffic to the first network-resource with the network device based on the first mapping information; and

load balancing traffic to the second network-resource by with remote load balancing device based on the second mapping information.

9. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

determining a mapping between a private VIP address on a network device and a public VIP address, both VIP addresses being associated with a network-resource accessible ~~via~~ using the network device;

if the mapping between the private VIP address and the public VIP address is determined to be present, sending the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to a load balancing device that can load balance traffic to the network resource; and

updating an address record to allow the load balancing device to interpret the received public VIP address as corresponding to a virtual address on the network device and to use the received public VIP address in connection with a load balancing metric that is based on virtual addresses rather than real addresses.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the network device can load balance a first network-resource associated with the network device, and wherein the load balancing device can load balance a second network-resource associated with the network device using metrics received from the network device, the method further comprising sending a private VIP address instead of a public VIP address associated with the first network-resource to a load balancing component of the network device.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein sending the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to ~~a~~the load balancing device includes sending the public VIP address to a load balancing component of the network device that load balances the network-resource.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein sending the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to a load balancing device includes sending the public VIP address to a load balancing device that is remote from the network device and that can remotely load balance the network-resource.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of providing load balancing among host servers using a load balancing device as a proxy to an authoritative domain name server, the method comprising:

assigning a first address and a second address to at least one server associated with a first network site, wherein the assigned first address is a private virtual internet protocol (VIP) address and the assigned second address is a public VIP address;

determining mapping information between the assigned first and second addresses at a network device associated with the first network site;

sending the mapping information for the host servers associated with the first network site from the first network device to the load balancing device; and

using the mapping information at the load balancing device to rank servers associated with the first network site based on at least one metric usable with virtual addresses rather than with real addresses.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising:

receiving other mapping information about host servers associated with a second network site at the second network site; and

load balancing host servers of the second network site based on the other mapping information received at the first network device in addition to sending mapping information about host servers associated with the first network site to the load balancing device.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising updating an address record accessible by the load balancing device to indicate that an address associated with the received mapping information corresponds to a virtual address on the network device.

17. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a first component to determine presence of a mapping between a private VIP address and a public VIP address;

a second component to receive the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the first component if the mapping is present;

an address record that can be updated to indicate that the public VIP address corresponds to a virtual address; and

a third component to load balance traffic to the public VIP address based on a metric related to virtual addresses rather than real addresses.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the first, second and third components are integrated in a same network device.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 18, further comprising a fourth component remote from the network device to load balance traffic to a network-resource, the fourth component being coupled to receive a public VIP address instead of a private VIP address associated with the network-resource and to indicate that this received public VIP address corresponds to a virtual address for the network-resource.

20. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the second and third components are located in first network device remote from a second network device in which the first component is located.

21. (Currently Amended) A network device, comprising:

a means for determining mapping information between a private VIP address and a public VIP address, both VIP addresses being associated with a network-resource;

a means for sending the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address to a load balancing component that load balances traffic to the network-resource; and

a means for interpreting the public VIP address as one corresponding to a virtual address associated with the network-resource, and for using the public VIP address in a metric for load balancing that is based on virtual addresses rather than real addresses.

22. (Currently Amended) The network device of claim 21 wherein the means for determining the mapping information includes at least one of a means for determining that information from user configuration input, a means for determining the mapping information through a message communication with a mapping device that maps private VIP addresses to public VIP addresses, and a means for determining that information by directly accessing internal storage tables of a mapping device that include the mapping information.

23. (Currently Amended) The network device of claim 21 wherein the means for using the public VIP address in the metric for load balancing include at least one of a means for load balancing a remote network-resource that is associated with the public VIP address, and a means for load balancing a local network-resource that is associated with the public VIP address based on either a public VIP address or private VIP address communicated to the means for load balancing the local network-resource.

24. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture, comprising:  
a machine-readable medium having instructions stored thereon to:  
determine a mapping between a private VIP address on a network device and a public VIP address, both VIP addresses being associated with a network-resource accessible via using the network device; and

if the mapping between the private VIP address and the public VIP address is determined to be present, send the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to a load balancing device that can load balance traffic to the network-resource, to allow the load balancing device to update an address record to indicate that the received public VIP address corresponds to a virtual address on the network device and to use the received public VIP address in connection with a load balancing metric that is based on virtual addresses rather than real addresses.

25. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 24 wherein the network device can load balance a first network-resource associated with the network device, and

wherein the load balancing device can load balance a second ~~network~~-resource associated with the network device using metrics received from the network device, the machine-readable medium further including instructions stored thereon to send a private VIP address instead of a public VIP address associated with the first ~~network~~-resource to a load balancing component of the network device.

26. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 24 wherein the instructions to send the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to a load balancing device include instructions to send the public VIP address to a load balancing component of the network device that load balances the ~~network~~-resource.

27. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 24 wherein the instructions to send the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to the load balancing device includes instructions to send the public VIP address to a load balancing device that is remote from the network device and that can remotely load balance the ~~network~~-resource.

28. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 24 wherein the instructions to send the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address from the network device to the load balancing device, include instructions to send the public VIP address instead of the private VIP address to allow the load balancing device to match the virtual address on the updated public record with an address on an address list received in a domain name system reply.

29. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one metric is an active bindings metric that prefers a VIP address having a maximum number of active real servers bound to it.

30. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein said load balancing metric is an active bindings metric that prefers a VIP address having a maximum number of active real servers bound to it.

31. (New) The method of claim 14 wherein said at least one metric is an active bindings metric that prefers a VIP address having a maximum number of active real servers bound to it.

31. (New) The system of claim 17 wherein said metric related to virtual addresses is an active bindings metric that prefers a VIP address having a maximum number of active real servers bound to it.

32. (New) The network device of claim 21 wherein said metric for load balancing is an active bindings metric that prefers a VIP address having a maximum number of active real servers bound to it.

33. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 24 wherein load balancing metric is an active bindings metric that prefers a VIP address having a maximum number of active real servers bound to it.